

Amendments to the Specification

The applicants request the office replace the following paragraphs in the specification as follows:

[0093] FIGS. 31 and 32 show an embodiment of the present invention with a slide cap 120 within a first cylindrical component 110. The first cylindrical component 110 has a substantially rigid elongated tubular structure having a proximal and a distal end and having an opening 104 aligned with the axis of the actuation component 40 extending continuously between the proximal and the closed distal end. The first cylindrical component 110 includes an annular structure 102 used as a retaining ring, wherein the annular structure being on the most proximal end of the outer surface of the component 110 so as to prevent the component 110 from

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advancing past second cylindrical component 70. Thus the first cylindrical component 110 and the second cylindrical component 70 form collapsible interlocking members.

[0094] The slide cap 120 is located within the first cylindrical component 110. The first

cylindrical component 110 includes an annular ring 44 positioned on the distal outer surface of the first cylindrical component 110 so as to prevent the second cylindrical component 70 from advancing past the first cylindrical component 110. The distal end of the first cylindrical component 110 has an annular opening 104 in the most distal part of the first cylindrical component 110 and having its axis in alignment with the axis of the first component so as to allow the needle cannula 24 to pass through it. Yet another feature of the first cylindrical component 110 is a surface 106 positioned at the most distal end of an internal opening 108 and the surface 106 is slanted at an angle to the axis of the first cylindrical component 110. FIG. 35 shows the first cylindrical component 110 having a recessed area consisting of two parallel walls 111 being spaced apart so as to allow surfaces 124 of cap 120 (FIG. 33) to be in a sliding fit between the walls 111, and the walls are oriented in the slanted direction of surface 106.

[00078] FIGs. 62 and 63 show another embodiment of the present invention with first cylindrical component at an angle with respect to the needle.

[00079] FIGs. 64 and 65 show another embodiment of the present invention with an identifying mark placed on the needle shield to show the orientation of the bevel on the needle.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATED EMBODIMENTS

[00080] Reference will now be made in detail to an embodiment of the present invention, example of which is illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

[00081] FIG. 1 shows a needle shield assembly 20 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The needle shield assembly 20 has a needle assembly 100 that includes a hypodermic needle cannula 24 and a needle hub 22. The needle cannula 24 has a distal end 68 that is beveled to define a sharp tip, and a proximal end rigidly attached to needle hub 22. An opening extends between the proximal and distal ends of the needle cannula 24 for dispensing fluid through needle cannula 24. A safety cap 10 covers the needle cannula 24 before use. All the following embodiments of the present invention may include a hypodermic needle and hub or a syringe having a hypodermic needle rigidly affixed to its distal end as illustrated in FIG. 56.

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[00082] The needle shield assembly 20 as seen in FIG. 2 includes a release ring 40 with latches 38, a cylindrical actuation component 50 with releasing features 74, and cylindrical axially aligned components 60, 70 and 80. When dispensed, the cylindrical components 60, 70, 80 form an elongated interlocked assembly around the needle component 24 and may be constructed of polyethylene or other injection moldable plastic. Inside the cylindrical components 60, 70, 80 is a spring 54 and a cap 90. The spring 54 and cap may be made of stainless steel. The cap 90 may also be injection molded from a hard plastic.

a retaining structure including